(e) how many incidents did take place during the last three years, wherein Sri Lankan Navy harassed Indian fishermen, giving details of each incident; and

(f) what steps are taken to put to an end this increasing menace of Sri Lankan Navy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Yes Sir. We have information that six Indian fishing trawlers with 26 fishermen were taken into custdy by Sri Lankan Navy on 14-2-95 inside Sri Lankan waters at location five nautical miles north off Talaimannar between 0500-0600 hrs.

(b) to (d) At the intervention of the Indian High Commission in Colombo, all the six trawlers, along with the 26 crew members were released the next day i.e. on 15-2-95 by the Government of Sri Lanka. The Tamil Nadu Government has confirmed safe return of the fishermen and their trawlers at Rameshwaram.

(e) During the last three years, (1992, 1993 and 1994), 41 incidents of harassment/firing/other attacks on Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy were reported. Of these, 32 incidents involved firing while 9 incidents were of other attacks. A total of 25 fishermen were reported killed and 54 reported injured in these incidents.

(f) The Government of India has taken up strongly each incident with the Government of Sri Lanka, expressing its concern and requesting for expeditious release and/or compensation for injury/damage as appropriate. Bilateral discussions were held in October, 1993 and in March, 1994 to discuss measures for preventing such incidents of attack on Indian fishermen in future. Both sides are agreed that there is need to implement effective measures devised to prevent recurrence of such incidents. The issue was also discussed during visits of the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka in April, 94 and again in December, 94. All relevant aspects of this matter continue under discussion between the two Governments. Further talks on this subject are likely to take place shortly.

Establishment of Consulates in Bangalore

1302. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any request from the Karnataka State to establish Consulates of developed countries like United Kingdom, the United States of America, Germany and Netherland in Bangalore: and

(b) if so, what is the state of progress for establishment of each of the Consulates?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In accordance with the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, 1963, establishment of Consular Relations between two States take place by mutual consent. It is for the foreign Governments desirous of opening Consular Officers/Posts, to convey their intentions to the receiving State through diplomatic channels. While examining such proposals/requests, inter alia, the principle of reciprocity is normally observed. No such request has been received from these countries.

Presentation of Passport applications by travel agents

1303. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) what are the reasons for which the travel agents are not empowered to present applications for passports in the Passport Offices, causing considerable inconvenience to individuals who have to stand in long queues for presentation of the same and for answering bureaucratic

queries which make them return again and again to the Passport Offices;

(b) whether it is a fact that earlier any one could apply for passport by presentation of application through travel agents who took full responsibility to present the same to Passport Offices; if so, whether it is a draconian control measure which the Ministry has imposed in these days of liberalisation;

(c) whether Government would revert to the old policy of presenting passport applications through travel agents; and

(d) whether Government would consider the recommendations of Parliamentary Standing Committee in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) The system of recognition of travel agents was dispensed with with effect from 24-7-92 as complaints had been received of some travel agents having indulged in malpractices by submitting forged documents to acquire passports. In conformity with the decision taken in July 1992, any travel agent/individual can deposit passport application forms at Passport Offices on proper authorisation by the applicant. Hence the system is less restrictive, and correspondingly less subject to irregularities and unhealthy practices.

(c) and (d) In responding to the recommendations of the Standing Committee, Ministry have stated that "the introduction of the new systems had been challenged by the Travel Agents in the law courts and the case went upto the Supreme Court. The Judgement of the Supreme Court is awaited. At the High Court level all excepting Tamilnadu have ruled against the Travel Agents."

Indian delegation in UNHRC meeting

1304. SHRI HIPHEI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether recently concluded session of United Nations Human Rights Commission was participated by an Indian Delegation;

(b) if so, the details thereof with names of members of the Indian delegation;

(c) whether some protocol changes were made while constituting the Indian delegation;

(d) whether the Indian delegation drew the attention of the Commission towards miserable condition of Muhajirs and Christians in Pakistan; and

(e) if so, the details thereof, with reaction of the Commission thereto and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (c) An Indian delegation comprising the following members participated in the 51st session of the UN Commission of Human Rights held in Geneva from 31st January to 10th March, 1995:

1. Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad (Minister for Civil Aviation)
2. Shri Salman Khurshid (Minister of State for External Affairs)
3. Shri Bhuvnesh Chaturvedi (Minister of State PMO)
4. Shri I. K. Gujral, MP
5. DR. Farooq Abdullah
6. Shri Inderjit, MP
7. Shri Brajesh Misra
8. Shri Natwar Singh
9. Prof. Khusro
10. Ms. Savitri Kunadi, Joint Secretary (UNE), MEA